

From: Geoff MyGov
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 10:00 pm
To: Jonathan Black
Subject: Strategic Plan

Hi Jon,

I recently sent you an email in regards to your request for suggestions for Communications Protocols.

I would like to provide some thoughts after reading the draft NSW RSL Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

I am in my early sixties and for a long time I resisted joining the RSL for most of the reasons stated by the current younger Veterans. However, I joined Wingham RSL Sub-branch begrudgingly as I wanted to become an Advocate to assist my fellow Veterans. Wingham RSL Sub-branch being an ESO. I was lucky to join a progressive Sub-branch without too many of the Vietnam warrior speed humps that originally kept me away.

My first observation is that the RSL National (as part of the ESORT) promised many things to support Advocates during the development of the Advocates Training and Development Program (ATDP), but as yet the RSLs have failed to deliver on almost all promises. I imagine that RSL National had the concurrence of all the State RSLs?

You have Advocates located in a lot of rural and regional areas within NSW. Having these Advocates correctly trained can satisfy a number of your Goals:

- Goal 1. The Veteran Sponsors that are mentioned are already in place in many towns - they are Advocates. The description of the tasks of a Veteran Sponsor are in large covered by Wellbeing Support Officers and Advocates. With a little additional training they would meet your needs. This training could be included in the ATDP curriculum. Commemoration Officers could also be included.
- Goal 2. RSL National and RSL NSW do not lobby well and they do not lobby the right organisations. The three main partners in Veteran wellness and rehabilitation are DVA, ADF and the ESOs and it is sensible to have a DVA Liaison Officer embedded with DVA to gain foresight into policy development and future changes as they will affect the ESOs and their delivery of services and support to Veterans. Well trained Advocates will identify Veterans' issues and engage with them. The NSW RSL Organisation Chart does not identify a DVA Liaison Officer although I imagine that RSL does send someone to DVA fora.
- The RSL NSW web site does not advertise RSL NSW Advocates. The site advertises DefenceCare and Veterans Sports Australia which are great if you live in Sydney, but not the grass roots volunteer Advocates located in rural and regional locations. RSL QLD advertises its Advocates (<https://rslqld.org/find-help>).

Investment in RSL NSW Advocates is sorely lacking especially for Advocates located in small rural Sub-branches which have limited funding provision. The Advocates are a great resource as they are located nearly everywhere in NSW (or they can get there).

I have had email correspondence with DefenceCare and suggested a model similar to that proposed in the Plan with little acknowledgement. I have offered to be a trial RSL NSW Veteran Centre in the Manning Valley. I am the only ATDP qualified Compensation Advocate in the Mid Coast LGA with a

very large client base and workload which sees me working almost full time on clients' claims. This becomes even more important with the possibility of Taree RSL Sub-branch folding.

I hope to meet you at the Gloucester RSL Sub-branch meeting on the 09 March 2020 to continue discussion on the Strategic Plan (I must admit I have only read the Plan once and I will need to digest its content a little more).

DI am not a detractor, but rather a supporter and I believe the Strategic Plan has encapsulated the requirements needed for the RSL to survive and thrive in the future.

Thanks for taking the time to listen. I support the forward momentum.

Cheers,
Geoff Harrison